

VZCZCXYZ0027
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHBBO #8135/01 3241531
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 201531Z NOV 07
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0179
INFO RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA IMMEDIATE 7877
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS IMMEDIATE 9561
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ NOV 9075
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA IMMEDIATE 5653
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA IMMEDIATE 0845
RUEHQD/AMEMBASSY QUITO IMMEDIATE 6315
RUEHGL/AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL IMMEDIATE 4179
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE 1517
RUCNDA/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 1870

UNCLAS BOGOTA 008135

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

FOR WHA/AND AND DRL/MLGA AND IO/RHS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PHUM PREL KTIA UN CO

SUBJECT: COLOMBIA'S RESPONSE TO UNGA THIRD COMMITTEE
COUNTRY RESOLUTIONS DEMARCHE

REF: A. SECSTATE 157026
1B. SECSTATE 145641

SUMMARY

¶1. (SBU) On November 17 and 18, the Ambassador spoke to President Uribe and Foreign Minister Araujo, in President Uribe's presence, to press for GOC support on country-specific human rights resolutions on Iran, North Korea, Belarus, and Burma (reftels). The GOC appears committed to its global policy to abstain on country-specific resolutions, though Araujo told the Ambassador he would review the GOC position. Araujo agreed to consider abstention with explanation, not to change positions. Vice FM Mejia told us the GOC feels "burned" by the GOC experience on UNSCR 1612 on Children in Conflict, and "saw a risk" from the HR resolutions. Araujo told the Ambassador that he would welcome a call from senior USG officials, but their position was necessary to defeat future Colombia-specific resolutions.
END SUMMARY.

AMBASSADOR REACHES OUT

¶2. (SBU) Ambassador Brownfield spoke to Araujo on Friday, November 16 and Sunday, November 18, the latter in front of President Uribe on a bus, to push the GOC to support the USG on the Iran, Belarus, Burma, and North Korea country-specific human rights resolutions. These conversations followed an original pitch by the Ambassador in September and three additional contacts by Embassy. The Ambassador encouraged the GOC to rethink its standard abstention policy on country-specific resolutions in these cases. In light of the concrete reality these resolutions represent to the Third Committee, he argued Colombia ought take a position and not protect these abusive regimes. The Ambassador asked Araujo "Does the GOC really want to stand on the sidelines on resolutions against these oppressive regimes?" He suggested that Araujo, a hostage himself for six years, should see the imperative of taking a stand.

GOC WARY OF IMPLICATIONS TO COLOMBIA

¶ 13. (SBU) Araujo told the Ambassador that the GOC would continue its general policy to abstain on country-specific resolutions--possibly with "explanation" in these cases. Mejia--who Araujo said manages the UN account in the MFA--confirmed to A/Polcouns that the GOC prefers that the UN Human Rights Council handle these cases, citing the Council's "consistent mechanism" to address human rights issues. Araujo and Mejia expressed disappointment with the results of UNSCR 1612 on Children in Conflict, noting that they unsuccessfully sought USG assistance in keeping Colombia out of the resolution and annexes. The Ambassador reminded Araujo of USG assistance in changing the implementation of the Children in Conflict resolution in the face of member state resistance. Mejia told us the GOC "saw a risk in the HR resolutions for the Colombia situation," for UNGA HR resolutions that were "more condemnation and less cooperation."

¶ 14. (SBU) Araujo and Mejia said the MFA had thoroughly analyzed the policy, which was approved at "high levels." Araujo promised to review the decision, but noted that President Alvaro Uribe did not intervene on this level of UN issues. Looking somewhat pensive, the FM told us a call from Washington would not change the GOC position.

¶ 15. (SBU) The Ambassador raised the issue again with Araujo on November 18 while sitting on a CODEL bus next to Uribe. The Ambassador suggested it was pointless to argue against country-specific resolutions in principle or for Human Rights Council jurisdiction, because the resolutions would come before the Third Committee and Colombia would have to vote. Araujo said Colombia would abstain, but was willing to issue an explanation of vote if we thought it helpful. He said that the GOC concluded from their child soldiers resolution experience that the only way to avoid Colombia-specific resolutions in the future was to join states that opposed country-specific resolutions.
Brownfield